

upon prior initiatives to improve Federal debt collection practices by providing Federal agencies with the additional tools they need to improve Federal debt collection. It is almost identical to H.R. 4857, a bill that passed the House of Representatives with overwhelming bipartisan support under suspension of the rules in the 105th Congress. We passed these provisions by a vote of 419 to 1 earlier this year.

I would like to commend the gentleman from California (Chairman HORN), who has done an outstanding job in leading to improve the Federal debt collection practices through his diligent legislative oversight activities. The gentleman has worked to assure that the taxpayers get every dollar they are entitled to and no more.

I also want to mention and commend the leadership of the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), who has continued her partnership with the gentleman from California (Chairman HORN) since the time she served in the position of ranking member of this subcommittee.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER), the ranking member. He had an excellent series of questions this morning of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue and the General Accounting Officer. The gentleman is deeply committed to an effective and efficient government, and especially to getting at the non-tax debt.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. H.R. 1442, as amended, contains provisions designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Federal debt collection and credit management. It would also assist State and local governments in their efforts to acquire much needed surplus property for law enforcement and emergency response. This legislation has broad bipartisan support, as was evident on the floor. The provisions are the result of a bipartisan effort between majority and minority on the Committee on Government Reform, working closely with the administration.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1442, the Law Enforcement and Public Safety Enhancement Act of 1999. I am a co-sponsor of this legislation which makes permanent the General Services Administration authority to transfer federal surplus lands at no cost to state and local governments for the purpose of law enforcement and emergency response services.

H.R. 1442 will have a direct and immediate impact on my Congressional District as well as a number of other districts throughout the country. Currently, thirteen sites across the nation, one of which is in my District, are utilizing a temporary authorization allowing the

Department of Justice (DOJ) to transfer excess federal property to local government entities for law enforcement and public safety purposes.

This temporary authority, which expires December 31, 1999, allows local law enforcement, fire services, and emergency management agencies the opportunity to receive federal surplus property through a "no-cost" transfer. This legislation aims to make permanent this temporary authority.

In my Congressional District, the Fifth District of Alabama, the City of Huntsville has applied for the transfer of a Naval Reserve Center to the City for use as a public safety training facility for our police officers, firefighters, and rescue personnel. This facility will allow Huntsville to provide excellent training to the men and women who safeguard our citizens. Currently, Huntsville's application is under review. Many projects that are currently underway or those pending applications for land transfers—like the one in my district—will be severely impacted by the quickly approaching sunset date of December 31, 1999. This legislation will permanently allow the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to sponsor the use of excess federal property for law enforcement, public safety, and emergency management purposes.

I would like to once again express my strong support for this legislation. We in Congress can and should do everything in our power to assist law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency management personnel in their efforts to improve public safety on our streets, in our schools, and in our neighborhoods.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1442, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "To reduce waste, fraud, and error in Government programs by making improvements with respect to Federal management and debt collection practices, Federal payment systems, Federal benefit programs, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1442, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

#### SILK ROAD STRATEGY ACT OF 1999

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1152) to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to target assistance to support the economic and political independence of the countries of South Caucasus and Central Asia, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1152

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Silk Road Strategy Act of 1999".

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The ancient Silk Road, once the economic lifeline of Central Asia and the South Caucasus, traversed much of the territory now within the countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

(2) Economic interdependence spurred mutual cooperation among the peoples along the Silk Road and restoration of the historic relationships and economic ties between those peoples is an important element of ensuring their sovereignty as well as the success of democratic and market reforms.

(3) The development of strong political, economic, and security ties among countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia and the West will foster stability in this region, which is vulnerable to political and economic pressures from the south, north, and east.

(4) The development of open market economies and open democratic systems in the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia will provide positive incentives for international private investment, increased trade, and other forms of commercial interactions with the rest of the world.

(5) Many of the countries of the South Caucasus have secular Muslim governments that are seeking closer alliance with the United States and that have active and cordial diplomatic relations with Israel.

(6) The region of the South Caucasus and Central Asia could produce oil and gas in sufficient quantities to reduce the dependence of the United States on energy from the volatile Persian Gulf region.

(7) United States foreign policy and international assistance should be narrowly targeted to support the economic and political independence as well as democracy building, free market policies, human rights, and regional economic integration of the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

#### SEC. 3. POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES.

It shall be the policy of the United States in the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia—

(1) to promote and strengthen independence, sovereignty, democratic government, and respect for human rights;

(2) to promote tolerance, pluralism, and understanding and counter racism and anti-Semitism;

(3) to assist actively in the resolution of regional conflicts and to facilitate the removal of impediments to cross-border commerce;

(4) to promote friendly relations and economic cooperation;

(5) to help promote market-oriented principles and practices;

(6) to assist in the development of the infrastructure necessary for communications,